

LIBRARIANS' ADVOCATE

Number 7 June 1975

American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

By The Numbers; or, Up Your Quota

Last month, 71 out of 89 people who work in the Catalog Department of the University of California, Berkeley, Library, signed a petition protesting the adoption of "quantitative standards." Employees in other units of the library, especially those in technical processing areas, are beginning to be concerned as well. What brought about this united response? What is the cause of so much distress among library employees?

The head of the Catalog Department first announced the news to a regular meeting of its various division heads: "quantitative standards" were now to be required of all employees working in the Department. The announcement came without any prior discussion among library staff. The Division Heads were then told that each division would be responsible for working out its own specific standards, and that the standards would be used in each employee's performance evaluation.

EMPLOYEE OPPOSITION

When the decision was relayed to the divisions (some Heads announced it sooner than others), several concerned employees held a meeting to discuss the implications of the standards and to explore their own feelings about the matter. The discussion revealed that employees were strongly opposed to the use of quantitative standards, seeing them as a possible threat not only to themselves, but also to the quality of work done in the department.

Employees' objections center around two basic points. First and foremost, the use of quantitative standards is a factory

Continued on page 2

PAY INEQUITY:

THE LAST WORD?

The final California State budget for 1975/76 does not contain any provision for an inequity increase for University of California librarians. The original inequity request of the University, a minimal 5.25%, was "blue-pencilled" out of the budget by Governor Brown, and the University administration at that point dropped its brief attempt to get an inequity increase for UC librarians.

What the University is proposing instead is an extensive restructuring of the Librarian pay scale. And, since the restructuring is to proceed without any significant amount of new money, it cannot really help the overwhelming majority of UC librarians. The restructuring will eliminate half-steps, increase the amount of time between raises (two years at the Associate level; three years at the Librarian level), and raise the top and bottom salary levels so that the pay range will be \$11,652-\$27,648. It will also add two steps at the top of the Associate level, where most non-administrative librarians are likely to end their careers.

COSMETIC CHANGES

The proposed new pay scale, whose shape the University administration has long attempted to impose, looks good on paper, but it drastically, perhaps fatally, injures the clear case for a substantial inequity increase which UC librarians have proven to the California legislature over the past two years. The salary range will be "raised" by the dropping of steps from

Continued on page 4

Quantification...

Continued from page 1

method unsuitable for use in a library, especially a great research library such as UC Berkeley intends to be. Production line methods produce a uniform result more desirable in a manufacturing plant than in a research library, which must provide a great diversity of library users with access to information in all its myriad forms of publication. Catalog Department employees are well aware of the decreased quality of service resulting from cataloging changes already made under the pressure of economic necessity, and do not want to see this trend continue. Secondly, employees see the possible negative uses to which quantitative standards could be put, fearing possible coercion under a quota system and the unfair denial of merit increases on the basis of the quantitative standards.

PETITION CIRCULATED IN CATALOG DEPARTMENT

After the meeting, the same several employees decided to enlist the support of other Catalog Department workers by circulating a petition expressing their views. An overwhelming majority of Catalog Department members agreed with the petition, and most of them signed it. Several employees with supervisory responsibilities agreed but decided not to sign, preferring to express their individual opinions, including objections to the standards, from a supervisor's point of view.

CONCERN AMONG OTHER EMPLOYEES

The Catalog Department, however, cannot feel discriminated against. The concept of quantitative measurement is to be applied in future to all sectors of the library, public and technical services alike. Members of the Acquisition Department were informed during the following week that they also would have to set quantitative standards, although they were not directed to work on such standards immediately, as were Catalog Department Di-

vision Heads. Furthermore, work has begun in the Reference Services Committee on finding ways to quantify reference service. The "quantification" effort is aimed at all library units.

WHY THE CONCERN?

Why are the employees so concerned? Are they lazy, trying to avoid being pinned down to some responsibility for their work? Catalog Department employees honestly don't think so. Most of them, professionals and non-professionals alike, have been doing their best to cope with more work than they can handle. These employees want to take pride in their work and in performing a service for library users and the university community. They see the quantitative standards as a threat to that pride and that service.

When it comes right down to it, just what do quantitative standards accomplish? Will they improve the quality or increase the quantity of cataloging done? No, say the employees, for the work will have to be made even more uniform, in order to accommodate the use of the standards. If the quantitative standards are used as quotas, employees will regard them as a threat hanging over their heads. Catalog Department members feel that the adoption of quantitative standards might increase the output of simpler, easily-counted parts of the catalog job, but that it would do so at the expense of problem-solving and other more qualitative, not-so-countable aspects of the work.

MERIT RAISES INVOLVED

If quantitative standards won't raise the quality or quantity of Catalog Department work, what will they do? Some employees feel that the only distinctive "contribution" quantitative standards can make is to provide administrators with a simple means to compare employees with one another and to cut down the number of merit increases. This is not a goal with which Catalog Department members can identify, especially when it would be achieved at the cost of the quality of their work. The employees

Continued on page 3

"INCLUDE SOMETHING NEGATIVE"

According to several middle-management sources, UC's library administration now wants some negative material included in all merit and promotion reviews. Ostensibly, such material is only required for "balance."

However, as reviews grow tougher and tougher, particularly for promotion, but also for merit increases, the conclusion is inescapable that reasons are needed to turn people down.

Everyone knows that there is always some area in performance that could be improved. Under the new system, adequate or exceptional performance can no longer simply be recognized, with attendant step or promotion increases. Something negative has to be added.

The layers of review keep increasing, and any split opinion can always be resolved negatively. It is increasingly apparent that the University Librarian is seeking more and more reasons to hold down promotions and merit increases. This is unfair to librarians, is damaging to their morale, and hurts people who already cannot keep up with the true cost of inflation. Bureaucratic "reasons" cannot justify unfair behavior. The unfair behavior must be stopped.

Quantification,

Continued from page 2

see quantitative standards as eroding both areas of reward for which people work: their pay, and their pride in the job. Their opposition is understandable. Who would want to be paid less to do poorer work?

ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE

The petition has been sent to Mr. Dougherty, with copies to Robert M. Corley, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Employee Relations, and to Morley Walker of the Univer-

Defense fund report

We are pleased to report that the Librarians' Defense Fund received \$688.50 in response to our special "fund drive" last October. Nearly half of the 73 contributions came from librarians who are not members of the AFT.

The money will be applied toward payment of \$1730 in court costs in the arbitration of our dispute with the University over the 1972 strike settlement agreement. In that agreement, the University promised to provide a salary inequity increase of "up to 12%" in 1972/73, and to consult with the AFT in the process of determining the specific percentage. The University then moved quickly to grant a 1% inequity increase, with no more than a notification to the AFT. Since this seemed to us a clear violation of the agreement, and since the strike settlement had also provided that grievances arising out of the agreement would be subject to advisory outside arbitration, the AFT requested that the decision be submitted to arbitration. When the University refused, claiming the amount of the increase was not arbitrable, the AFT sued and won a decision in Alameda County Superior Court forcing the University to submit the issue to arbitration. Unfortunately, the arbitrator chose to assume the narrowest possible interpretation of his charge and decided that he was not competent to determine the extent of the inequity in librarians' salaries and so let the University's decision stand.

The recent increase in AFT dues has brought UC-AFT operations out of the red at last and we have been assured that the University Council will assume responsibility for the remainder of the arbitration debt. Thanks again to all who contributed.

sity-wide Administration. No official or written response has come from the administration, but Mr. Dougherty and some of the concerned Catalog Department employees are planning a meeting to discuss the quantitative standards.

Pay inequity...

Continued from page 1

the bottom of the scale, and the addition of new steps at the top. But this "raise" will take place around the majority of UC librarians, not for them. Only a few librarians enter UC employment at the bottom step, and only a few librarians are likely to reach the final top step. The changes for these few, whose salaries have been raised a disproportionate 18.1% and 24.2%, will mask the essentially unchanged position of most UC librarians, who remain in the middle range without any raise.

ADMINISTRATIVE DURESS

Why did UC librarians accept such a poor proposal? There are two obvious reasons. First, the University administration has been pushing such a proposal against stiff librarian opposition for several years. It has been virtually declared that this year such a proposal is going to be carried out anyway, regardless of librarians' wishes. Without collective bargaining rights, many librarians felt helpless to prevent this move, and thought that it might be possible to preserve at least "internal" equity within the restructured system. Vice President Taylor's special salary committee made a special effort on this point, though they confessed that they could not do anything about the external inequity situation.

Secondly, librarians felt that this year, and possibly the next few years, are a bad time to be fighting for an inequity increase, because of the current depression. Governor Brown's opposition to increased UC salaries was also undoubtedly a depressing factor. Thus a "take the money and run" psychology prevailed. Unfortunately, there is almost no money to take, a mere \$55,000 spread unequally among some 500 librarians. And most of the provisions for increase will not go into effect until next year. It is heartening to note that a significant minority of UC librarians, including a majority on some campuses, rejected the proposed restructuring even

under these adverse circumstances.

THE FUTURE

For several years, the University of California administration has been publicly recognized as dragging its heels on affirmative action, even by the complacent U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. Once the restructuring of librarian salaries takes place, the University administration is likely to drop even its token efforts to get an inequity increase for UC librarians in the future. It will be up to all UC librarians, both union and non-union, to continue pressing the matter. Even if our work is made more difficult because of this proposed restructuring, we cannot afford to give up. What we have already achieved looked virtually impossible two years ago, and our example has already helped other college and university librarians to make similar demands. If we can keep together, we can undoubtedly make new gains in the future, both for librarians and for library service.



Brian Savano

